



# A Medicare Prescription Drug Update From Congressman Jim Ryun

Last year, Congress added a voluntary prescription drug benefit to Medicare. Beginning in May, there will be new options available to seniors to help pay for prescription drugs. While I did not believe that this legislation went far enough to secure a strong Medicare system for generations to come, I believe it is critically important that you know how it affects seniors and their Medicare benefits. This newsletter is designed to answer your questions about the new law.

## Key Dates:

### End of April 2004:

- An overview resource publication listing all Medicare-endorsed drug discount cards, their sponsors and their benefits is mailed to all seniors.
- Low income seniors are notified by mail if they qualify to receive a \$600 credit to pay for their medicine.
- Medicare-endorsed drug card sponsors can begin publicizing the benefits of their card.

### May 3, 2004:

- Seniors may begin to sign-up for their Medicare-endorsed drug card of choice and enroll to receive savings. For more information visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

### June 1, 2004:

- Medicare-endorsed drug card sponsors begin offering discounts at local pharmacies; low income seniors can begin using their \$600 credit to buy their medicines.

### 2005:

- New preventative benefits begin.
- Seniors may begin to sign-up for the new prescription drug plans.

### January 1, 2006:

- New prescription drug plans begin.

## Key Contact Info:

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## Please Note:

Some unscrupulous groups will inevitably try to scare seniors into believing that this new law threatens their Medicare benefits with mailings, phone calls and television advertising. I encourage all seniors to contact the Center for Medicare Services or my office if you see any information that claims your benefits are in jeopardy. We will be happy to assist you.